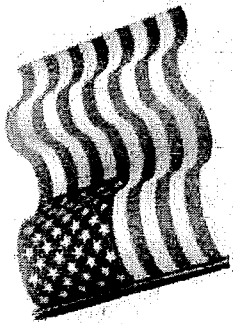


EXHIBIT G



Mount Vernon News

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MOUNT VERNON, OHIO, 43050 THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 2008

Crowd shows support for MV science teacher

By PAM SCHEHL
News Staff Reporter

MOUNT VERNON — Nearly 100 people gathered on Mount Vernon's Public Square on Wednesday afternoon, in a show of support for middle school science teacher John Freshwater. The Mount Vernon City School administration has demanded Freshwater remove a Bible from his desk at school, even though a Bible has been a fixture in his classroom for many years.

The school district told Freshwater he cannot, as a public school teacher, engage in any activity that promotes or denigrates a particular religion.

In a formal press release, Superintendent Steve Short said, "The Mount Vernon Schools today directed one of its middle school science teachers to remove from his classroom the Ten Commandments he had displayed and to remove his Bible from his desktop while students were in his room. The Mount Vernon Schools has not taken this action because it opposes religion, but because it has an obligation under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution to protect against the estab-

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lishment of religion in the schools. As a public school system, the district cannot teach, promote or favor any religion or religious beliefs."

Freshwater complied with the request to remove a copy of the Ten Commandments from display in his classroom, but is resistant to removing the Bible. He said the district's mandate is an infringement of his First Amendment rights to free speech and to freely express his beliefs.

"I respect and support my superiors in the Mount Vernon City Schools," Freshwater read from a prepared statement. "This is not about them. It is about the forces at work in America that are determined to censor viewpoints which they do not share."

"With those thoughts in mind, my family and I have made the decision, with much soul-searching, that I cannot remove the book from my desk. ... Thousands of citizens in this community have built their lives on deeply held religious convictions, and it is for them that I stand today against those who

would like to relegate any persons with different points of view to second-class citizens because of the nature of the speech. This strikes at the very heart of our cherished free speech rights, for which thousands of brave men and women have given their lives."

Many people cheered when Freshwater concluded, "Discrimination against religion or religious views and censorship of any point of view is un-American and can no longer be tolerated."

According to the First Amendment Center, the Supreme Court decisions in the 1960s did not require that schools be "religious-free zones." The court did not eliminate prayer or the Bible from public schools; it barred state-sponsored religious practices.

In fact, a school may help students study about various religious beliefs, but it cannot force the students to accept those beliefs or to practice them. Guidelines from the U.S. Department of Education state that "public schools may not provide religious instruction, but they may teach about religion, including the Bible or other scriptures."

See **SUPPORT** on Page 3A



John Freshwater, center, addresses a sizable crowd on Mount Vernon's Public Square Wednesday afternoon, proclaiming his First Amendment rights to keep a Bible on his desk at school. With Freshwater are his wife, Nancy, right, and Dave Daubenmire, left, of Pass the Salt Ministries. (Photo by Pam Schehl)

Support

Continued from Page 1A

Beth Mooreland, who attended the rally with her daughter, Jooniper, believes Freshwater has the constitutional right to have a Bible.

"It's his workplace," she said. "We can bring a book to our workplace. He wasn't reading it, he wasn't pushing it. From what I've heard, it was just sitting on his desk."

"I'm not a public school student, but I was at one time," said Courtney Schiavi, 17. "I'm home-schooled now, but I was a public school student for a long time. I feel [Freshwater is] standing up for something that needs to be stood up for. It's not right just because they don't agree with a certain thing. It's because it's the Bible. But if it was a Muslim person, this wouldn't be happening."

"It's time for Christians to stand up," said Max Erwin Sr. of Gambier. "What would the martyrs think about us today?"

Pastor Jill Street of Miracle Life Church, near Utica, attended the rally wrapped in an Amer-

ican flag and carrying a sign bearing, in large print, The Lord's Prayer.

"Guess what?" she said. "If you believe in the Bible, the Bible says heaven and earth will pass away but not one jot or tittle will pass away from his word. Not one little comma or period. The faith that is in God's people cannot be stamped out. To say you can't confess faith... that is a matter of, for the Christian, denial of

their salvation. You can't even have a book lying on your desk?"

It is unclear as to what precipitated the school district's action. Freshwater and Short declined to comment beyond their prepared statements. Freshwater has been a teacher in the Mount Vernon School District for over 20 years.

Representatives of Pass the Salt Ministries and Minutemen United were also there to support Freshwater.